

# Serve Up an Authentic St. Patrick's Day Feast at Home

We caught up with the Museum of Newport Irish History for tips.

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by [Casey Nilsson](https://www.rimonthly.com/author/caseynilsson/) (<https://www.rimonthly.com/author/caseynilsson/>)



([https://www.rimonthly.com/content/uploads/2020/03/potato-544073\\_1280.jpg](https://www.rimonthly.com/content/uploads/2020/03/potato-544073_1280.jpg))

Via Pixabay

We can't go to the pub for a Guinness. We can't go to an Irish restaurant and sit down to a feast of corned beef and cabbage. But we can put on some music, boil a pot of water and get cooking.

For St. Patrick's Day inspiration, I caught up with Ann Arnold of the [Museum of Newport Irish History](http://www.newportirishhistory.org/index.htm)

(<http://www.newportirishhistory.org/index.htm>), who explained how the Irish food traditions that we know and love were twentieth century creations.

“The Irish came without food traditions because they were coming from the famine,” she says, citing the book, *Hungering for America*, as a resource for those who'd like to learn more.

Sure, they had the potato — a crop they came to depend on and, when it failed, initiated a four-year famine in which a million people died and a million more fled, some to Rhode Island.

“People came with nothing,” says Arnold of the mass emigration. “It was really very stark. People didn't come here with a bunch of family recipes because of what they went through.”

Without major food traditions of their own, the Irish came to rely on dancing, singing and storytelling to preserve their heritage. They also borrowed recipes from their immigrant neighbors for community events, including the annual St. Patrick's Day feast.

But what about corned beef, you ask? Back home, many Irish couldn't afford to buy corned beef, a major export that was raised by tenant farmers for absentee landowners. But when Irish immigrants came to America,

corned beef — once a luxury — was cheaper than other meat alternatives, including bacon. They dug in.

So, while you might be looking at your pantry stores and wondering what you should make for dinner, perhaps try eating like the Irish. Arnold suggests colcannon, which is mashed potatoes mixed with cabbage or kale, or boxty, a traditional Irish potato pancake.

But, if you can swing it, you can do your Irish ancestors proud and order a luxurious meal of bangers or corned beef to-go from your neighborhood restaurant. (Arnold mentions [La Forge in Newport](https://www.facebook.com/laforgenewport/) (<https://www.facebook.com/laforgenewport/>) is offering a buy-one-get-one-free corned beef dinner deal if you mention an ad on Facebook.)

While you're cooking up your colcannon and boxty, be sure to tune into [What's Up Newp's Facebook page](https://www.facebook.com/WhatsUpNewp/) (<https://www.facebook.com/WhatsUpNewp/>) for a live stream of Irish tunes by Timmy May at 4:30 p.m. (fun fact: he's Arnold's husband!) and catch a live performance by the Dropkick Murphys at 7 p.m. at [dropkickmurphys.com](http://www.dropkickmurphys.com) (<http://www.dropkickmurphys.com>). And Brian O'Donovan of "A Celtic Sojourn" has [a wonderful playlist of reflective St. Patrick's Day music here](https://www.wgbh.org/music/celtic/2020/03/05/a-reflective-st-patricks-day-music-here) (<https://www.wgbh.org/music/celtic/2020/03/05/a-reflective-st-patricks-day-playlist-for-you>).

## COLCANNON

*adapted from [mayo-ireland.ie](https://www.mayo-ireland.ie/en/about-mayo/food-drink/food-irish-recipe-colcannon.html) (<https://www.mayo-ireland.ie/en/about-mayo/food-drink/food-irish-recipe-colcannon.html>)*

**Prep time:** 45 min

**Cook time:** 10 min

**Serves:** 4 servings

## **Ingredients**

3 cups potatoes

1 1/3 cups cabbage or curly kale

1 onion

1/2 cup cream

1/4 cup butter

Salt and pepper

## **Directions**

1. Boil potatoes and cabbage separately in salted water for 15-20 minutes until tender.
2. Heat the butter in a heavy-based pan and when the butter is melted add the onion finely chopped and brow
3. Add the cabbage, the mashed potatoes and the cream.
4. Stir well.
5. Cook gently for few minutes.
6. Season to taste with salt and pepper and serve.

## **BOXTY**

*adapted from [mayo-ireland.ie \(https://www.mayo-ireland.ie/en/about-mayo/food-drink/food-irish-recipe-colcannon.html\)](https://www.mayo-ireland.ie/en/about-mayo/food-drink/food-irish-recipe-colcannon.html)*

**Prep time:** 30 min

**Cook time:** 1 hour

**Serves:** 8

### **Ingredients**

4 cups potatoes

2 3/4 cups self-raising flour

1/4 cup butter, melted

1 tsp baking powder

Salt and white pepper

Milk or buttermilk to mix

### **Directions**

1. Divide the potatoes in half and boil one half in salted water until cooked.
2. Grate the remaining half into a clean tea towel and wring out the liquid.
3. Drain the boiled potatoes and mash them.
4. Mix the grated and mashed potatoes together and add the flour and baking powder.

5. Melt the butter, stir in and mix to a soft dough, adding milk or buttermilk.
6. Pre-heat the oven to 200°C.
7. Place the dough on a floured surface and knead gently.
8. Shape into four flat, round cakes and mark each with a cross.
9. Brush with little milk to glaze and place on a greased baking tin.
10. Bake for 25/30 minutes or until well risen and golden brown.
11. Divide the boxtty into “faryl” along the cross.
12. Serve warm and buttered.

Tips: The boxtty can be cooked on a griddle, cooking each side for 15 minutes

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